THEOSOPHY

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The whole Kosmos has sprung from the DIVINE THOUGHT. *This thought impregnates matter, which is co-eternal with the* ONE REALITY; *and all that lives and breathes evolves from the emanations of the* ONE *Immutable—Parabrahm —Mulaprakriti, the eternal one-root. The former of these is, so to say, the aspect of the central point turned inward into regions quite inaccessible to human intellect, and is absolute abstraction; whereas, in its aspect as Mulaprakriti —the eternal root of all,—it gives one some hazy comprehension at least of the Mystery of Being.*

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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Whose mind is even, when honored by the good, or persecuted by the wicked, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

—*The Crest Jewel of Wisdom*

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 66 JUNE, 1978 NUMBER 8

TEACHING IN SYMBOLS

THERE is a tendency—whether or not it is "natural" remains a question—in the modern mind to regard symbols, myths, and allegories as no more than colorful imagery which gets in the way of actual knowledge. Our intellectual preference is for abstract definition. There may be some justification for this feeling, since we live in an age of accelerated Manasic—for the most part *Kama*-Manasic—development, in which the abstract idea is regarded as a form of truth without intermediaries. The sciences are not considered to be successful until they become mathematical, suggesting that precision or exactitude in abstraction is the only legitimate goal of thought.

Why, then, one might ask, is so much attention given to the interpretation of symbolism in *The Secret Doctrine* and other Theosophical works? The immediate answer, of course, must be that if we would know what the ancients taught, we must study the symbolic forms of communication they used. Madame Blavatsky devoted a long section (Part II) of the first volume of her major work to the evolution of symbolism, and at its end she gives the reason for this form of instruction:

> In their longing for the expression of some mysteries never to be wholly comprehended by the profane, the Ancients, knowing that nothing could be preserved in human memory without some outward symbol, have chosen the (to us) often ridiculous images of the Kwan-Yins to remind man of his origin and inner

> nature. . . . The subjective can hardly be expressed by the objective. Therefore, since the symbolic formula attempts to characterise that which is above scientific reasoning, and as often far beyond our intellects, it must needs go beyond that intellect in some shape or other, or else it will fade out from human remembrance. (I, 473.)

But symbols, it may be said, are easily misunderstood. There is no doubt about this; that they are misunderstood is evident from the many pages of *The Secret Doctrine* devoted to correcting both theological and materialistic misinterpretations, over-simplifications, and vulgarizations of the symbols used in the teachings and practices of both Eastern and Western religion. Yet except for those who insist upon dogmatizing—more of a Western than an Eastern vice—the very indefiniteness of symbolic representation is a protection. It is invitation, not revelation. The method of symbolic communication is analogy and correspondence, not precise definition. Symbols are manifolds of relative truth and are read by each one according to his powers of perception (and imagination).

Some observations by Mr. Judge concerning the general evolutionary process help to show why symbols have such great importance. In "Synthesis of Occult Science" he says:

> Man is a perfected animal, but before he could have reached perfection even on the animal plane, there must have dawned upon him the light of a higher plane. Only the perfected animal can cross the threshold of the next higher, or the human plane, and as he does so there shines upon him the ray from the supra-human plane. Therefore, as the dawn of humanity illumines the animal plane, and as a guiding star lures the Monad to higher consciousness, so the dawn of divinity illumines the human plane, luring the monad to the supra-human plane of consciousness. This is neither more nor less than the philosophical and metaphysical aspect of the law of evolution.

The symbol, in short, is a means of suggesting realities and meanings which are beyond our state of development; they are forms which have some correspondence with the truths that cannot be known precisely with our present intellectual capacity. Symbols, moreover, do not chain the mind to any particular formulation, but stir it with various possibilities. The study and interpretation of symbols is self-induced; the mind moves over various ranges, finding its own level of meaning, appropriate for

the time but not final. This, too, is the process of evolution, since all knowledge is self-achieved and cannot really be "given" by one to another. We move from plane to plane of relative illusion, and a symbol may serve the learner differently on each plane.

Our world, as H.P.B. makes plain in "What Is Truth?", is a world of relative truth:

> In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. . . .
>
> Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. . . . But to approach even terrestrial truths requires, first of all, *love of truth for its own sake,* for otherwise no recognition of it will follow. And who loves truth in this age for its own sake?

Often enough, it is the simple presence of symbols within the sight of ordinary people which provokes them to thought. The wonder and awe excited by great monuments erected in an unknown past may be the beginning of serious questioning. The symmetries of form in stone—of, perhaps, a pyramid—may awaken a wisp of soul-memory, and then the imagination may begin to fashion some intermediate form of thought, approximating the meaning of the symbol.

Symbols speak to the ego within, much more than to the intellect circumscribed by time and place, and most of all by the popular conceits of the hour. The educators of the human race have always understood their power. In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 750), H.P.B. says:

> . . . there are records which show Egyptian priests—Initiates—journeying in a North-Westerly direction, *by land, via* what became later the Straits of Gibraltar; turning North and travelling through the future Phœnician settlements of Southern Gaul; then still further North, until reaching Carnac (Morbihan) they turned to the West again and arrived, *still travelling by land,* on the North-Western promontory of the New Continent. Or on what are now the British Islands, which were not yet detached from the main continent in those days. . . .
>
> What was the object of their long journey? And how far back must we place the date of such visits? The archaic rec-

ords show the Initiates of the Second Sub-race of the Aryan family moving from one land to the other for the purpose of supervising the building of *menhirs* and dolmens, colossal Zodiacs in stone. . . .

The modern archæologist, though speculating *ad infinitum* upon the dolmens and their builders, knows, in fact, nothing of them or their origin. Yet, these weird, and often colossal monuments of unhewn stones—which consist generally of four or seven gigantic blocks placed together—are strewn over Asia, Europe, America, and Africa, in groups or rows. . . .

There is no country from which they are absent. Who built them? Why are they all connected with Serpents and Dragons, with Alligators and Crocodiles? . . . surely the two famous mounds—one in the Mississippi valley and the other in Ohio—known respectively as "the Alligator Mound" and "the Great Serpent Mound," were never meant for tombs. (II, 752-3.)

Some of these monuments may have been tombs, but others were not:

It is with the so-called Druidical remains, such as Carnac in Britanny and Stonehenge in Great Britain, that the travelling Initiates above alluded to had to do. And these gigantic monuments are all symbolic records of the World's history. (II, 754.)

So, also, with great epics and myths:

The allegory of Ulysses, whose companions were devoured while the king of Ithaca was saved by putting out with a firebrand the eye of Polyphemus, is based on the psycho-physiological atrophy of the "third" eye, Ulysses belongs to the cycle of heroes of the Fourth Race, and, though a "sage" in the sight of the latter, must have been a profligate in the opinion of the pastoral Cyclopes. His adventure with the latter—a savage gigantic race, the antithesis of cultured civilization in the Odyssey—is an allegorical record of the gradual passage from the Cyclopean civilization of stone and colossal buildings to the more sensual and physical culture of the Atlanteans, which finally caused the last of the Third Race to lose their all-penetrating *spiritual* eye. (II, 769-70.)

As every student knows, *The Secret Doctrine* begins with a discussion of the geometrical symbolism used to depict the awakening of the universe to activity. The point, the circle, and the diameter are the bearers of profound cosmic as well as philosophical meaning. The Western Kabalists employed the same symbols:

AIN-SOPH, they taught, could not be comprehended, could

not be located, nor named, though the causeless cause of all. Hence its name—AIN-SOPH—is a term of negation, "the inscrutable, the incognizable, and the unnameable." They made of it, therefore, a boundless circle, a sphere, of which human intellect, with the utmost stretch, could only perceive the vault. . . . "The limitation of this sphere will, of necessity, be a great *Circle,* and the direct rays of thought in any and every direction must be *right line radii* of the circle. This, then, *must* be, humanly speaking, the extremest all-embracing conception of the Ain-Soph *manifest,* which formulates itself as a *geometrical figure,* viz., of a circle, with its elements of curved circumference and right line diameter divided into radii. Hence a geometrical shape is the first recognisable means of connection between the Ain-Soph and the intelligence of man." This great circle (which Eastern Esotericism reduces to the point within the Boundless Circle) is the Avalôkiteswara, the *Logos* or Ver*bum* . . . But this circle or manifested God is as unknown to us, except through its *manifested* universe, as the ONE, though easier, or rather more possible to our highest conceptions. This Logos which sleeps in the bosom of Parabrahmam during Pralaya, as our "*Ego* is latent (in us) at the time of *sushupti,* sleep;" which cannot cognize Parabrahmam otherwise than as *Mulaprakriti*—the latter being a cosmic veil which is "the mighty expanse of cosmic matter"—is thus only an organ in cosmic creation, through which radiate the energy and wisdom of Parabrahmam, *unknown to the Logos, as it is to ourselves.* Moreover, as the Logos is as unknown to us as Parabrahmam is unknown in reality to the Logos, both Eastern Esotericism and the Kabala—in order to bring the Logos within the range of our conceptions—have resolved the abstract synthesis into concrete images; viz., into the reflections or multiplied aspects of that Logos or Avalôkitêswara, Brahmâ, Ormazd, Osiris, Adam-Kadmon, call it by any of these names—which aspects or Manvantaric emanations are the Dhyan Chohans, the Elohim, the Devas, the Amshaspends, &c., &c. . . .

> It is . . . only in this "light" (of consciousness) of mental and physical perception, that *practical* Occultism can throw this into visibility by geometrical figures; which, when closely studied, will yield not only a scientific explanation of the real, objective existence of the "Seven Sons of the divine Sophia" . . . . *Objective*—in the world of Maya, of course; still, as real as we are. (I, 429-30.)

This "light," H.P.B. explains, is the light called *Daivaprakriti* in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* and is "the permutation, in our manifested world, of Mulaprakriti." Thus are the spiritual or subjective realities given a relative objectivity for us, enabling us to think some-

what about higher planes beyond our perception. Longing and aspiration result from such thinking, giving focus, in time, to the will.

But how can there be, as is sometimes claimed, more "reality" in symbols and myth than in the facts catalogued by science? Why should there be more truth in the symbol story of the *Bhagavad-Gita* than would be contained in a precise chronicle of the doings of an ancient prince and his enemies and allies? To accept the truth in symbols would mean really letting go of our materialism. It would mean recognition that our life and evolution are indeed "purely spiritual"—"a journey of the 'pilgrim-soul' through various *states* of *not only matter,* but Self-consciousness and self-perception." (*S.D.* I, 175.)

By symbols we become able to interpret the true meaning of our lives, since the planes on which that meaning unfolds are presently unknown to us. To use symbols in this way is to begin to learn the Mystery Language—the language of the soul. What stands in the way? An illusory sense of reality is the only significant obstacle. As H.P.B. puts it: "Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities." (*S.D.* I, 40.) This, for the student or aspirant, makes a challenge to both daring and the power of the imagination. How shall we persuade ourselves that what we see is not "the real," that what we now want is not anything of enduring value, that what we fear is nothing to be afraid of, and that the actual processes of growth through which we are passing are invisible to us, and unknown? At present we have only rare, intuitive clues to what is happening—clues that reach us in odd moments of relaxation, when the mind, being passionless, becomes free.

Yet it can be no accident that only the literature, the drama, the art which give play to symbols filled with transcendental suggestion are able to hold the attention of mankind. No great epic is without a higher spiritual meaning. We *feel* the majesty of these works; they speak to what is eternal in us; the unsaid truth in them is cherished beyond all else. The metaphysics of our secret greatness may still be to us a foreign language, yet its symbolism filters past the barrier of our ignorance and moves us to inward response. The symbols have finite, material form, but

their symmetries are timeless, and what is timeless in us recognizes the hidden verity.

Metaphysics, then, as we learn it with our brain minds, is a way of anticipating on this plane what will become direct perception in some future cycle. The abstractions of transcendental metaphysics are all that we can now know, in mental terms, of what lies behind symbolic representation. (*S.D.* I, 329.)

Hence our study of metaphysics. By this means the intellect is habituated to thinking in categories that have a correspondence with the way things are on higher planes. It is a two-dimensional version, yet a version, and when the natural movement of the embodied Manasic principle is toward the associations of ideas with which metaphysics deals, the obstacles to direct perception gradually become less opaque. Symbols deal with feeling, while abstract ideas are concerned with structure. Feeling is what we know in and of ourselves—we know it, that is, without understanding its meaning. Structure, which creates and defines relationships, gives ratio—or rational understanding. When feeling and a knowledge of structure are joined, true philosophy is born —the love of truth.

Our lives represent the movement of centers of awareness—conscious monads—through the seven-layered fabric of illusion, traversing the structure of the universe created long ago by the ideation of beings of the hierarchy to which we belong. We now perpetuate the graded illusions, yet at the same time learn from them as, slowly but inevitably, they dissipate before our strengthening powers of perception. So the universe, we say, is Maya, but it is also the Ladder of Being. The obstacles we confront are properly called ignorance, yet they must also be identified as the raw material of our growth, the stuff of human experience, the means of our discovery of both ourselves and the world and also the "matter" that is to be "raised up."

How shall we look upon the world? H.P.B. gives this explanation of the great philosophical doctrine of the Mahamaya:

> All that which *is*, emanates from the ABSOLUTE, which, from this qualification alone, stands as the one and only reality—hence, everything extraneous to this Absolute, the generative and causative Element, *must* be an illusion, most undeniably. But this is only so from the purely metaphysical view. . . . Everything is relative in this Universe, everything is an illusion.

> But the experience of any plane is an actuality for the percipient being, whose consciousness is on that plane; though the said experience, regarded from the purely metaphysical standpoint, may be conceived to have no objective reality. (*S.D.* I, 295-96.)

Those who have the subtle sight of the subtle-sighted know this, and their dispassion is a natural result. But at the same time they know that the hosts of "percipient beings" inhabiting the planes of illusion feel intensely and wonder longingly. Their pain and struggle are not less real for being the result of illusion. And so the Buddhas, the Teachers, the lovers of their fellows, while having achieved dispassion, are moved by compassion. They know that while the world is many, the Self is One. During cycle after cycle, they come to instruct, joining symbol with metaphysics in the proportion needed to touch and open the minds of humankind.

STEPS ON THE PATH

There must be within the man something which he already knows, that leaps up and out when he scans the books of wisdom; a thing already existing, which only takes an added life or confirmation from books. True Theosophy has all that is practical, but many forget this; there is no greater system of practise than that required by it.

Desire wisdom; love all men; do your duty; forget yourself; let each thought and act of your life have for its aim the finding of divine wisdom; strive to apply that wisdom for the good of other men. If you search in every direction, Light must come to you. Let the place in which you now are be the lonely room you speak of, and seek to find in everything the meaning. Strive to know what they are, and by what governed or caused. This is the first step. Live your life with this ever before you. Purify your thought as well as your body. Reason all you can, feel all with your heart you may, and when intellect and heart fail you, seek for something higher. This is the A.B.C.; it is enough for the present.

—From the *Path*

MACROCOSM-MICROCOSM

MAN is the microcosm of the macrocosm; so, if we imagine one individual in his primeval condition at the beginning of a solar system, that condition will contain potentially all possible changes of density; those changes will be the necessary steps, under the general law of the solar system, to reach the most concrete expression.

The concrete expression must be reached in order that the descending intelligences may be able to help or impel to a higher standard the forms of consciousness not yet self-conscious; for all forms meet and mingle in man. Each change in density of sheath involves a loss of spiritual perception, but permits knowledge of the denser matter not obtainable in any other way.

As the universe exists solely for the purpose of the soul, and as resistance is met in degree in all states of matter below the first state, the power of creation, preservation and destruction must be in operation on every plane and all the time. Creation works in the change of density, and towards the ideal form for fullest expression on this plane. This involves continual adjustment, implying the preservation of that which fulfils the purpose, and the destruction of that which does not, as well as further creation to take the place of that which was destroyed. The Creator, Preserver and Destroyer within his own sphere, then, must be the permanent Ego. The same law applies everywhere. For instance, in business, a new department is added; the other departments keep on and the new one is either shaped into line with the general purpose—or cut off.

The Secret Doctrine says we are past the middle point of the seven Rounds; this means that we, Egos, have passed through the changes in density three times, each time reascending to the original state, and each descent marking a further density of each change. We are now to ascend, perfecting and assimilating, for three and a half Rounds more, each succeeding plane becoming less dense until the completion of the seventh—which might be called *real* matter. Relating this to the soul, it would appear that

NOTE.—This article was first printed in THEOSOPHY for November, 1929.

the sheaths are not yet what they will be, though the Perceiver is one through all the changes. The Self is the key, the plan, the purpose and the fulfilment—to lose that sight, is to lose all.

"When the Self ideates, the Manvantara is going, and the ideations of the Self are 'the Rays from and one with the Absolute';" meaning all beings from man up—all the rest of the Cosmos being the results of the ideations of these Rays. Could there be any ideations other than those of the Self, whatever their focalizations? Ideation implies consciousness, and as everything in the universe from the atom to Brahma is conscious, each in its degree, can the Self be absent from any? Is it not apparent that the personal man holds himself as separate from all the rest, and that the lower forms have less and less of such sense as they descend?

How does this sound? The Self ideates and the universe is formed in primeval focalizations. In these *upadhis* its ideation produces less ethereal and more limited focalizations; so, on to the more concrete, all are forms and aspects of the Self, indissoluble as to essence, ever changing as to aspect and form, each aspect and form acting and being acted upon by every other in both ascending and descending cycles, or Rounds; all rebecoming the Self at the close of a Manvantara, each to re-emerge in its integrity at the beginning of a new one, to continue its eternal recurring active progression.

To get back to the Real would be like standing back from the whole manifestation and "seeing how it looks," to use a phrase. Standing back thus, the Real is gained, but as rest is followed by activity, still further and greater manifestations must follow. The Real is the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer in order to further create, but is not subject to change, although the Cause and Experiencer of all change.

"The Self acts only through the creatures." It can know itself only *in action* through its differentiations, which by the inherent power of Self-hood and the action and re-action of all in giving direction, are raised from perception to self-consciousness. This Self-consciousness, once achieved, must continue to expand or be lost.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE RACES OF MAN

II: ROUNDS AND RACES

OUR Earth, as the visible representative of its invisible superior fellow globes, its "lords" or "principles" has to live, as have the others, through seven Rounds. During the first three, it forms and consolidates; during the fourth it settles and hardens; during the last three it gradually returns to its first ethereal form; it is spiritualised, so to say.

Its Humanity develops fully only in the Fourth—our present Round. Up to this fourth Life-Cycle, it is referred to as "humanity" only for lack of a more appropriate term. Now every "Round" (on the descending scale) is but a repetition in a more concrete form of the Round which preceded it, as every globe—down to our fourth sphere (the actual earth)—is a grosser and more material copy of the more shadowy sphere which precedes it in their successive order, on the three higher planes.

Every life-cycle on Globe D (our Earth) is composed of seven root-races. They commence with the Ethereal and end with the spiritual on the double line of physical and moral evolution—from the beginning of the terrestrial round to its close.

The Grand Cycle includes the progress of mankind from the appearance of primordial man of ethereal form. It runs through the inner cycles of his (man's) progressive evolution from the ethereal down to the semi-ethereal and purely physical: down to the redemption of man from his *coat of skin* and matter, after which it continues running its course downward and then upward again, to meet at the culmination of a Round, when the manvantaric "Serpent swallows its Tail" and seven minor cycles are passed.

Every "Round" brings about a new development and even an entire change in the mental, psychic, spiritual and physical constitution of man, all these principles evoluting on an ever ascending scale.

The humanities developed coordinately, and on parallel lines with the four Elements, every new Race being physiologically adapted to meet the additional element. Each Element adds to its own characteristics, those of its predecessor; as each Root-Race adds the characterizing sense of the preceding Race.

NOTE.—This is the second part of a six-part series on the Races of Mankind, collated from *The Secret Doctrine* and various articles by H.P.B.

In this Round no units of either of the kingdoms are animated any longer by monads destined to become human in their next stage, but only by the lower Elementals of their respective realms. The last human Monad incarnated before the beginning of the 5th Root-Race. The cycle of *metempsychosis* for the human monad is closed, for we are in the Fourth Round and the Fifth Root-Race. It can never be too often repeated, that the full-blown human Monads have to be first disposed of, before the new crop of candidates appears on this Globe at the beginning of the next cycle.

There must be a limited number of Monads evolving and growing more and more perfect through their assimilation of many successive personalities, in every new Manvantara. This is absolutely necessary in view of the doctrines of Rebirth, Karma, and the gradual return of the human Monad to its source—*absolute* Deity. Thus, although the hosts of more or less progressed Monads are almost incalculable, they are still finite, as is everything in this Universe of differentiation and finiteness.

With regard to the pre-human period, all that can be said, at present, is, that even up to the appearance of the "Mindless" First Race, the Earth was not without its inhabitants. More may be said: that which Science—recognizing *only physical man*—has a right to regard as the *prehuman* period, may be conceded to have extended from the First Race down to the first half of the Atlantean race, since it is only then that man became the "complete *organic* being he is now." And therefore it is, that, after this central turning-point has been passed in the Great Cycle—*i.e.*, after the middle point of the Fourth Race in the Fourth Round on our Globe—no more Monads can enter the human kingdom. The door is closed for this Cycle and the balance struck.

As to the question of the four distinct races of mankind that preceded our Fifth Race, there is nothing mystical in it, except the ethereal bodies of the first races; and it is a matter of legendary, nevertheless, very correct history. If the materialised forms, which are sometimes seen oozing out of the bodies of certain mediums could, instead of vanishing, be fixed and made solid—the *creation* of the first Race would become quite comprehensible.

The first race of men were, then, simply the images, the astral doubles, of their Fathers, who were the pioneers, or the most

progressed Entities from a preceding though *lower* sphere, the shell of which is now our Moon. Evolutionary law compelled the lunar "Fathers" to pass, in their monadic condition, through all the forms of life and being on this globe; but at the end of the Third Round, they were already human in their divine nature, and were thus called upon to become the creators of the forms destined to fashion the tabernacles of the less progressed Monads, whose turn it was to incarnate.

The First Race was simply composed of the astral shadows of the creative progenitors, having of course neither astral nor physical bodies of their own—this Race *never died*. Its "men" melted gradually away, becoming absorbed in the bodies of their own "sweat-born" progeny, more solid than their own. The old form vanished and was absorbed by, disappeared in, the new form, more human and physical. Thus the first sub-races of the Second Race were born at first by the process described on the law of analogy; while the last began gradually, *pari passu* with the evolution of the human body, to be formed otherwise. The process of reproduction had seven stages also in each Race, each covering æons of time.

There was no death in those days of a period more blissful than the Golden Age; but the first, or parent material was used for the formation of the new being, to form the body and even the inner or *lower* principles or bodies of the progeny. Death came only after man had become a *physical* creature. . . . The men of the First Race and also of the Second, dissolved and disappeared in their progeny. Till then there had been no regular death, but only a transformation, for *men had no personality* as yet. They had monads—breaths of the ONE Breath, and as impersonal as the source from which they proceeded. They had bodies, or rather shadows of bodies, which were sinless, hence *Karmaless*. Therefore, as there was no Kamaloka—least of all Nirvana or even Devachan—for the "souls" of men who had no personal *Egos*, there could be no intermediate periods between the incarnations. Like the Phoenix, primordial man resurrected out of his old into a new body. Each time, and with each new generation, he became more solid, more physically perfect, agreeably with the evolutionary law, which is the *Law of Nature*. Death came with the complete physical organism, and with it—moral decay.

The state of mental torpor and unconsciousness of the first two

races, and of the first half of the Third Race, is symbolized, in the second chapter of *Genesis,* by the *deep sleep of Adam.* It was the dreamless sleep of mental inaction, the slumber of the Soul and Mind, which was meant by that "sleep" and not at all the physiological process of differentiation of sexes. The History of the Races begins at the separation of the Sexes, when the preceding egg-bearing androgynous race perished rapidly, and the subsequent sub-races of the Third Root-Race appeared as an entirely new race *physiologically.* The first two races of men were too ethereal and phantom-like in their constitution, organism, and *shape,* even to be called physical men. The Atlanteans were really the first purely *human* and *terrestrial* race—those that preceded it being more divine and ethereal than human and solid. Immense periods of time must have elapsed since the separation of the sexes, without mentioning the First or even the Second Root-Races. As these must remain beyond the comprehension of minds trained in Western thought, it is found useless to speak in detail of the First and Second, and even of the Third Race in its earliest stage. One has to begin with the latter, when it reached its full human period.

(*To be continued*)

THE SOURCE OF BEING

Theosophy endeavors to present to man what his real nature is; that he is first, last, and all the time SPIRIT. Spirit means Life and Consciousness—the *power* to see, to know, to experience. We all have that. That is common to all of us. It is not separate in itself—it is the One Life in all beings of every grade. But we, as individuals, have evolved into individuals from the great Ocean of Life. We are Individualized Spirit, and so we each have a separate individual existence, which is continuous. In that sense we are an evolution, but an evolution of Spirit, not Matter—an evolution of Knowledge, not of form only. This has been obtained through observation and experience; whatever differences exist are because of more or less experience, or a better adaptation and application of it; there is no difference in the Source or Potentialities of any being.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

CONSCIOUSNESS AND DREAM

I

TIME is only an illusion or "dream" produced by the *succession of our states of consciousness* as we travel through eternal duration. Nothing is permanent except the one hidden absolute existence that each Soul is. The forms belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyan-Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern—our Intelligence—on a colourless screen—Matter. This Hierarchy of spiritual Beings, through which the Universal Mind comes into action, is like an army—a "Host," truly; each with its separate individuality or life, and its limited freedom of action—the expression of intelligence; and its limited responsibilities—the impression gained of the regnant Unity; each contained in a larger individuality, to which its own "interests" are subservient, and each containing lesser individualities in itself.

Light on the Path says: "The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will, recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful, complex, separated life exists, then indeed, and then only, he is upon the way."

Thus it is that the *Karma* of any Soul, or any collection of Souls, whether called a being, an earth, or a Universe, is the combination of the acts and thoughts of all beings of every grade which were concerned in the preceding evolutionary stream—the Buddhi of every Manas, the Manas in every form, however simple or however complex. So that there is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects. The *action,* that of Soul; the reaction, that of *all* Souls: Intelligent Law.

NOTE.—This two-part article is condensed from a series entitled "The Psychology of Dreams" which appeared in Vol. 6 of THEOSOPHY.

Maya, dreams or illusions, is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a *relative,* not an *absolute,* reality. *Samvritti*—relative knowledge—is called in *The Voice of the Silence* "origin of all the world's delusions," or dreams. It is *samvritti* to imagine that temporal things are permanent, to mistake a part for the whole. These are the appearances which the hidden noumenon assumes; they always depend for any observer upon his power of cognition. We cannot cognize the one hidden absolute reality directly, so long as we have sense instruments which bring only material existence into the field of our consciousness.

Mind is a name given to the sum of the states of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will, and Feeling, the working aspects of *Atma-Buddhi-Manas.* They are inseparable and convertible aspects and represent *Consciousness in action.*

Dream*less* sleep is one of the seven states of consciousness known in Oriental esotericism. In each of these states a different portion of the "mind" comes into action; or, to express it in another way, the individual is conscious in a different plane of his being. Not being remembered in the waking state it *seems* a blank, just as the sleep of the mesmerized subject seems to him an unconscious blank when he returns to his normal condition, although he has been talking and acting as a conscious individual would. During deep sleep, ideation ceases *on the physical plane,* and memory is in abeyance, because the organ through which the Ego manifests ideation and memory on the physical plane, has temporarily ceased to function. For Soul can only act on any plane through an appropriate basis or vehicle. But, whatever the plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane, are, for the time being, our only "realities." This is what is meant by *Maya.* And from the standpoint of the assumed "reality" of the particular plane we may be acting in, we necessarily form all our opinions, judgments and conclusions as to other planes, and esteem them to be illusions, hallucinations, "dreams." On the basis of the assumed "reality" of the plane we are acting in, we form our beliefs and dogmas, our creeds and religions, our philosophies and sciences, and our ideas of God, Law, Nature, and ourselves. This is what is meant by *samvritti.*

True psychology, therefore, is the consideration of any and all

states from the standpoint of the Soul, the consciousness that evokes, sustains and perceives them. Doing this, we begin to perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and that the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the Absolute Consciousness *and blended our own with it,* shall we be free from the delusions produced by *Maya*—"dreams."

We may now consider some phases of those states of consciousness known to us in the waking state as "dreams," as well as the composite nature of the waking state itself.

Our senses give us cognizance of the exterior or objective world. To the senses there is no other world than that, because they perceive no other world. To them there is no matter; there are only color, sound, smell, taste, and contact. Clearly, this is a state which we may call sense-consciousness. Minerals, plants, animals, have this state of consciousness, as well as ourselves; in some cases more acutely developed, or more predominant; in other cases less so. This is not *matter*; it is the consciousness so far manifesting *in* matter as we know it through the senses. This state is due to the body, and the body alone, which is our earth, or "matter." And what we call our senses are the focalizations in our bodies of the five "characteristics," that is, the five grades of intelligence so far acquired by the Souls which compose our bodies, and manifested by them. "Matter" is what we do *not* see; all that we perceive are the manifested characteristics. The Intelligence everywhere diffused through Space, as light is diffused, is concentrated in our bodies as light is concentrated *in* a lens, or thrown off by objects. The senses are our lenses which concentrate the light of intelligence diffused by aggregations, or bodies, of Souls less informed than ourselves.

The opposed aspect of sense-consciousness is that state which we know as sensation. Sense is the expression of physical consciousness; sensation the impression from physical consciousness. The one always proceeds from without inwardly; the other from within outwardly; so that the state called sense-consciousness is always being transformed into sensation, and the state named sensation is always being transformed into action of the senses. They are mutually interdependent and sustaining. The one is the

lowest mode, or manifestation, of the power to perceive; the other, the lowest mode of the power to receive; broadly speaking one is *touch* or contact, the process of physical evolution. The other is *feeling,* the mode of spiritual involution. They go hand in hand, in every plane of substance, in every form of being. We know that minerals, plants, animals, have in them this state of consciousness as well as ourselves, for one and all they manifest selective affinities and repulsions. The various combinations of chemical elements making up the "matter" we contact, no less than the various forms of the vegetal and animal worlds, cohere and sustain their peculiar structures through sense and sensation; through touch and feeling.

From the presence of these two states in ourselves there is possible the presence of a third state, which grows in them as in a soil and light—remembering always that "soil" implies not only earth, but water and air, and that "light" implies heat and the circulation of air and moisture. This third state of consciousness in us, and as well in the mineral, plant and organic forms of the Souls about, within and around us, we may call desire consciousness, which takes up the sensations, or impressions received through the senses, and feeds on them, as sensations are fed by the impacts of the senses. In this state we seek repetition of sensations which we feel to be concordant, and likewise seek to eject sensations which we feel to be discordant. We are not alone in the possession of this state of consciousness. In the atoms, as in the plant life and the animal life and the life in our bodies, there is always the dual force of desire, seeking that which is conformable to its own acquired sensations, and rejecting that which is not in accordance with its nature.

The combination of these three states in any organic or inorganic thing makes possible its existence or life. Or, putting it another way, the cohesion and activity of these three states in any Soul or aggregation of Souls, *is* the Life and the life-force, or *prana*—the Breath and the Breathing, as that magnificent Sanskrit word means. When the mutual interplay and support or sustenance of any one of the three states, sense or touch, sensation or feeling, and desire or *kama,* is disrupted, externally or internally, their unity is broken, *Life* can no longer manifest; one by one the Souls seek other conditions or combinations; the form disappears, and new forms appear. When this process is

related to the Soul it is truly called metempsychosis—Souls incessantly manifesting and disappearing. When they manifest a Body is formed and Life exists. When the conditions of manifestation are interrupted, broken up, the Souls no longer manifest, Life flies away to new combinations, the Body dissolves. When this process is related to bodies it is called reincarnation.

The names given to these four states in Oriental esotericism are, counting from the lowest upwards, *Prakriti,* "matter," whose "characteristics" are the *Indryas,* or five senses, constituting the basis of sense-consciousness; and *Kama,* "desire," whose "characteristics" are the *Karma-Indryas,* the five classes of impressions or perceptions corresponding to the five senses, constituting the basis of sensational consciousness; *Kosha,* "body," or "vehicle," of which there are said to be five, or one composed of each grade of "matter" concentrated in and corresponding to the Indryas; and *Prana,* "life," the manifestation of Kama through the Koshas. We can see that of these four states of consciousness, Prakriti and Kosha stand to each other in the relation of the Universal and the particular, and represent Physical Evolution: while Prana and Kama stand to each other as the whole to the part, and represent Intellectual or Psychic Evolution. One represents objectivity, the "things perceived." The other represents subjectivity, or the "perceptions." They are correlative and interchangeable, because both represent the action of the Soul, the *Perceiver,* and are but names, modes and processes of the acquisition of Intelligence by *expression* and *impression.*

We may now, perhaps, be in a position to appreciate the profound revelation waiting for us whenever we begin to study Nature internal and external, neither considering the one from the standpoint of the other, nor yet from the standpoint of samvritti, the Intelligence so far acquired and active in us, as if it were the true basis; but from the standpoint of the Soul, the Perceiver; that is to say, from the standpoint of *Psychology.* By this light we see that the basis of all intelligence is the action of Spirit upon Matter, of *Purusha* upon *Prakriti,* of Soul upon Souls, and of Souls upon Soul; that these Souls are *identical* in their *inherent* nature, differing only in the respective degrees of their *acquired* natures, or Intelligence; and that these varying degrees of intelligence have all come about through the mutual *action* of Soul upon Souls, and the *reaction* of Souls upon Soul—*Karma and Dharma,* or Action and Law.

This is the *actuality* of our own immortal being and mortal nature; this the eternal process of any and all manifestation: the Monadic or Spiritual acting upon the Prakritic or Material, from whence arises the Intellectual or Psychic, with all its states, limitations and conditionings, grouped under "Thought, Will, and Feeling."

As *Light on the Path puts it*: "The whole world is animated and lit, down to its most material shapes, by a world within it. This quality is characteristic of the life which lies within matter; for those who see it, need no lamp to see it by. If we took the trouble to call Nature into the witness-box we should find that everything which is perceptible to the ordinary sight, has something even more important than itself hidden within it; the microscope has opened a world to us, but within those encasements which the microscope reveals, lies the mystery which no machinery can probe."

We live and move and have our being in "matter." Our knowledge of it has become intuitive, so much so that we esteem it the only "reality," and fail to use our intuition in any other direction. We employ our "imagination" and our reasoning faculties, our hopes and fears and other feelings, in the vague and vain attempt to solve the mystery of higher states, and the unsolved problems of this, becoming that strange thing, a being which cannot see its own light, a thing of life which will not live, convinced until death that there is no seeing except by indirect means, no life except in the body we know. Yet the whole order of Nature evinces a progressive march toward a *higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is a proof of this. The very fact that adaptations *do* occur, that the fittest *do* survive in the struggle for existence, shows that what we in our ignorance call "unconscious Nature" is in reality an aggregate of forces manipulated by semi-intelligent beings, guided by higher Intelligences, whose collective aggregate constitutes at one and the same time the MIND of the Universe and its immutable LAW.

Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms is CONSCIOUS: *i.e.*, endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception. We must remember that because *we* do not perceive any signs—which we can recognize—of consciousness, say in stones, we have no right to say that *no*

consciousness exists there. There is no such thing as either "dead" or "blind" matter, as there is no "blind" or "unconscious" Law. To *see* that this is so, is to employ the intuition—direct perception.

The Universe is worked and *guided* from *within outwards,* and man is the living witness to this Universal Law and to the mode of its action. Every *external* motion, act, gesture, whether voluntary or mechanical, is produced and preceded by *internal* feeling or emotion, will or volition, and thought or mind. Thus the whole Kosmos is guided, controlled and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings—Souls in aggregation—each having a mission to perform, and who—whether we give them one name or another—are "messengers" in the sense only that they are, one and all, the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws. They vary infinitely in their respective states and degrees of Intelligence; and to call them all pure Spirits is only to indulge in poetical fancy. They are all in Evolution—Spiritual, Intellectual and Physical—and each of these Beings either *was* or prepares to become a man. They are *perfected,* when not *incipient,* men.

(*To be concluded*)

The Beginning Of Change

A free man may utter truthfully what he thinks and what he feels in the midst of thousands of men who by their actions and doings show something quite the opposite. It would seem that the truthful man must stand alone, yet it happens mostly that the majority also think and feel the same, only that they do not express it. What was yesterday a new opinion of the one man, to-day is the joint opinion of the majority. As soon as that opinion establishes itself, men's actions commence to change slowly, and by degrees.

—Leo Tolstoy

letters • questions • comment

Brotherhood, it is often said, is "a fact in nature." Yet quite evidently its realization on this plane is something not yet achieved. What is the value of suggesting that it is a fact in nature, as contrasted with speaking of it simply as a desirable goal?

The question recalls other statements which seem at least paradoxical, for example the claim that "everything is under law," despite the fact that the disorder in the world indicates that not only man-made law but also the laws of nature are continually being broken. How, it is sometimes asked, is this possible? A clue may be provided by still another saying. "Look inward," *The Voice of the Silence* enjoins, "thou art Buddha." The first two words are a light on the human feeling that we are anything but Buddhas. They suggest that there is work to do if the reality within is to become manifest and known.

The contrast is between the ideal and the manifested. We might say that if all action or behavior were ideal, there would be no need for learning and therefore no need for a world providing experience of diversity and difference.

Unity, Theosophy teaches, is the fundamental law. But, as *The Secret Doctrine* explains, "*reality* in the manifested world is composed of a *unity of units*." (I, 629.) Brotherhood is a term for this reality in human relations. It describes the unity of the relationship of having the same parents. Brothers may quarrel, but the fact of their relationship is not altered by this. When brothers quarrel, they are not honoring the *fact* of their brotherhood, and they sometimes feel this failure and stop quarreling. They stop because they know they are brothers and that hostility between them is not right. Thus knowledge helps them to overcome their differences. So also with all mankind and the relations of humans with one another and with the rest of life. As the teaching of

unity, the fact of brotherhood, is converted into individual realization, this knowledge becomes a living power in the guidance of action. There is natural or spontaneous "reverence for life" or brotherhood for all that lives.

Acts of brotherhood have power for good because they are chosen. Each such act is a step on the path back to the original unity; it is evidence of a lesson learned, of spirit remaining spirit even though acting in the world of matter and separateness. In "The Origin of Evil," H.P.B. gives the foundation explanation of all such questions:

> The seeds of evil and sorrow were indeed the earliest result and consequence of the heterogeneity of the manifested universe. Still they are but an illusion produced by the law of contrasts, which, as described, is a fundamental law of nature. Neither good nor evil would exist were it not for the light they mutually throw on each other. *Being*, under whatever form, having been observed from the World's creation to offer these contrasts, and evil predominating in the universe owing to *Ego*-ship or selfishness, the rich Oriental metaphor has pointed to existence as expiating the mistake of nature; and the human soul (*psüche*), was henceforth regarded as the scapegoat and victim of *unconscious* OVER-SOUL. . . .
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> Eastern wisdom teaches that spirit has to pass through the ordeal of incarnation and life, and be baptised with matter before it can reach experience and knowledge. After which only it receives the baptism of soul, or self-consciousness, and may return to its original condition of a god, *plus* experience, ending with omniscience. In other words, it can return to the original state of the homogeneity of primordial essence only through the addition of the fruitage of Karma, which alone is able to create an absolute *conscious* deity, removed but one degree from the absolute ALL.

Why do Theosophists speak so frequently of the importance of Karma and Reincarnation? There have been many good men who gave no thought to such matters, and some of them were even disbelievers in soul.

Goodness and understanding, while they have much in common, are not the same thing. With understanding goodness is joined with wisdom and its beneficent influence grows. Thinking about Karma and Reincarnation wears away at the sense of separateness. The simple idea, "My own shall come back to me," is the basis, on this plane, of responsibility. The idea that what now comes to us is the result of our own past action keeps us from blaming others for our misfortunes. Feelings of hostility are

checked at the source because we become convinced that only we are responsible for what happens to us. We no longer look for scapegoats.

Of course, for the ideas of Karma and Reincarnation to have this effect, it is necessary to *think* about them and develop their implications. Theosophy is not a moral code but an ethical philosophy for people who try to think. It is a system of thought afforded to those who want to begin to make their own destiny. It tells how the laws of nature—of mind and soul—work. It is a kit of tools for the increase of self-knowledge. It gives the reasons for goodness or right behavior. It helps men to become teachers of one another. The most useful tools are Karma and Reincarnation, since the operation of these laws touches every aspect of our lives, helping us to obtain *reasons* for what happens and what we do. Hence Theosophy is called the philosophy of the rational explanation of things.

It is unquestionably true that many men are good without knowing about Karma and Reincarnation, or without attention to these ideas. But if we regard such individuals in the light of reincarnation, we are led to think that they are showing forth qualities which were developed in past lives. They may not now remember how or why they learned to practice the virtues, or even be aware of them as virtues. The goodness comes naturally, as it should. One might think something of this sort about the Stoic philosophers, who said little or nothing about the immortality of the soul, yet practiced ethics that were truly consistent with eternal life. They showed other dimensions of the same truth, for reasons not wholly apparent, but perhaps because of the time in which they lived.

We now live in an age of inquiry, when men require explanations for what should be done. In the area of right action, no ideas are as illuminating of moral reality as Karma and Reincarnations. As Mr. Judge put it in one of his articles:

> Thousands of persons can understand these two principles, apply them as a basis of conduct, and weave them into the fabric of their lives, who may not be able to grasp the complete synthesis of that endless evolution of which these doctrines form so important a part. In thus affording even the superficial thinker and the weak or illogical reasoner a perfect basis for ethics and an unerring guide in life, Theosophy is building toward the future realization of Universal Brotherhood and the higher evolution of man. ("The Synthesis of Occult Science.")

on the lookout

Some Sloppy Deductions

A humorous article on the subject of reincarnation in last July's *Atlantic* has occasionally accurate perceptions along with some apparently deliberate confusions. The writer, Reuven Frank, says:

> Today's rampant attention to individuals who remember exactly—dumbfounding assembled academics and shattering the skepticism they came with—the details of one or more previous lives, preferably famous, does not promote the discussion. Such cases do not prove reincarnation. They prove, if anything, that reincarnation can occasionally be sloppy. It would make no sense for some departed spirits to lodge in new bodies while most did not, or some presently live bodies to house previous spirits while most utilized anonymous spirits previously unused. No. These authenticated spirits expressing themselves through contemporary bodies are necessarily of spirits with imperfectly laundered memories, poorly done work.

While this writer seems to have several things backwards, he is certainly right in saying that detailed recollections of supposed previous lives do not prove reincarnation. The astral world is a vast picture gallery made up mostly of "memories" of various sorts, and what is recalled by psychic means may or may not relate to a past existence of the individual involved. A "borrowed" memory may prove impressive to those who know nothing of the complex psychic endowment of human beings, or of the various deposits of impressions which may affect the inner sensibilities of those who open themselves to psychic influences. Yet Mr. Frank is right in suggesting that loss of memory in the great majority is not an argument against reincarnation. All reincarnate.

Not Enough Souls?

This short discussion concludes somewhat ridiculously with the suggestion that, as world population grows, the planet may run out of spirits or souls. The writer worries about the increasing draft on the "spirit bank,' saying:

> In past times the being about to be born could win a spirit

> which had not seen service for a thousand or two thousand years. Now the best to be hoped for is a half-century. And the gap keeps narrowing. The spirits are used too early, unrested and unmatured, uneasy. This explains a good deal about humanity today and why there are no longer any heroes, leaders, stars, men.

The time may soon arrive, he thinks, when there will be bodies without any souls to occupy them. "Then what?" The writer seems quite comfortable with the idea that the "spirit bank" where souls await rebirth is something like a cosmic service station which, by reason of increasing demand for "spirits" to incarnate, will, so to speak, run out of gas. So, as we said, his conclusion is ridiculous. But even so, the appearance of this article in the *Atlantic* shows the extraordinary currency of and interest in the idea of periodic rebirth. A joke or two cannot harm the doctrine, while reasoning about its processes, even from premises wholly misconceived, may prove an encouragement to those who, while attracted by the idea, have never tried to think about how it may actually work.

No Transmigration

Mr. Frank has meanwhile done some thinking of his own. Following are his observations concerning transmigration, or the claimed reincarnation of human souls in animal forms:

> To continue the discussion, clear distinction is necessary between reincarnation, of which there are beginnings of understanding, and transmigration, which is illogical junk, based on romantic anthropomorphism and imperfectly digested race memories of ancient animistic beliefs. Logic will go no further than the possibility of reincarnation within species, and as for extra-species reincarnation, that is an inquiry not worth pursuing, except for animals' rights leagues, and the like.

Since the writer is discussing reincarnation of humans, this conclusion cannot be faulted, even though, in respect to the reembodiment of animal intelligence or "soul," extra-species reincarnation is indeed a possibility or even the rule.

Pop "Occultism"

George Steiner, perhaps the most perceptive teacher of English literature in our time, had an article in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (Dec. 28, 1977) in which he attributed the decline of Western civilization to the absence of great and inspiring ideas. He speaks of the extreme poverty of both literature and the arts:

> There are three times as many registered astrologers in Europe and the United States as there are chemists and physicists. Charlatans, either gigly or sinister, peddle millions of copies of books about visitants from outer space who, in some Edenic past, left their occult spoors on the deserts of Peru or the stone circles of Carnac and Glastonbury.

Weak-Minded Literature

While Mr. Steiner may neglect the underlying significance of such relics from the distant past and see little merit in the present infusion of Eastern ideas throughout the West, it is clear that he is concerned mainly with the dilutions and sentimentality of these influences at the mass level of popular publication. His comment on modern art, while abrasive, seems accurate enough:

> Paintings are opaque scrawls; sculpture seems to be lumps of ugly matter, music banishes melody. Modern writing is so often autistic, technically demanding, defensive (the schism between poet and public, which dates to Baudelaire and Mallarmé, has not been healed.)
>
> At the very same time, the skills of literacy, the shared body of recognition and reference, which are essential if one is to harvest warmth and richness from the art and literature of the past, are vanishing. The simplest mythological, Biblical, historical allusion is riddling. Increasingly, what passes for education, particularly in the land of "affirmative action" and egalitarian dreams, is planned amnesia.
>
> Philosophy too has rather left us in the lurch. Whether or not the achievements of formal, linguistic investigation since Gottlob and Ludwig Wittgenstein are as illuminating as logicians and Anglo-American academic positivists would have it remains a moot point. As in transformational generative linguistics or "semiotics," now so desperately fashionable, the results are often of spurious profundity and the jargon that surrounds them is corrupting.

Dry-as-Dust "Philosophy"

The core of the trouble is the abandonment of great ideas and serious thinking by most modern academics:

> What is clear is this: Philosophy, in the current Anglo-American vein, has largely relinquished—indeed it has scorned—those central areas of metaphysics, of ethics, of esthetics, of political thought, that constituted the mainstream and splendor of the philosophic tradition. It has left reality, the obstinate, messy sovereignty of the every day world, to witch doctors on the one hand, and to intellectual terrorists

on the other. What it offers instead is dry tack for teeth on edge.

Prof. Steiner finds the new strength in recent theological thought impressive. It honors the reader, he says, "by taking his mental and moral capacities seriously," and among others he mentions Rudolf Bultmann and Hans Kung as examples of adult thinking and force of insight.

Underlying Insight

Interestingly Jacob Needleman, in his Introduction to *The New Religions*. speaks in a similar way of certain theologians:

> My courses in philosophy and in the history of Western religion were exploration into these themes [of human responsibility and ultimate possibility]. I agreed with Bultmann and others of the New Theologians that once the mythology was excised from the Western Bible, it could be read as an overpowering emotional statement of the existential insight that man is alone and unique, his tragic greatness consisting in the fact that he can make no echo in the universe. Such words as immortality, high life, faith or righteousness applied to the moment, *now*, and were a call for man to accept his total mortality and in accepting it to find his own destiny *in* himself and *for* himself. In reading these ideas into our Bible, I felt an immense sense of relief. I had never been entirely comfortable thinking of Jesus, Moses, St. Paul and others as irrelevant.

This is a curious passage, showing deep awareness of the moral verity in a widely known scripture, yet passing by the further depths concealed from immediate view by the symbolism of mythic ideas. Nor are we "totally mortal," except in personality.

Has "Disbelief Gone?

Prof. Steiner continues in the same vein:

> So much of what intuition now compels us to recognize as indispensable, and compels us to revert to even in disagreement, draws its powers from sources implicitly or explicitly theological. I am thinking of the writing of Martin Heidegger, of the poetry of Paul Celan, of the works of Boris Pasternak, Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn and Andrei D. Sinyavski (and what has our Anglo-American literary-academic circus to set beside them?). I am thinking of the poetry of Thomas Hardy, the only very great English poet of the century.
>
> It would be foolish to predict a religious revival in any formal and dogmatic sense (though there are significant pointers in just that direction in both the Jewish and the

Christian worlds). It is too soon to tell. But the hunger is obvious, and what it has been given to feed upon is often dangerous trash.

In a deliberate echo and footnote to Yeats's apocalyptic vision, the English poet Philip Larkin asks: "And what remains when disbelief has gone?" The answer may be neither as obvious nor as bleak as it looked only a decade ago.

Prof. Steiner looks at such recent developments—preparations, one may say, for a great change in the human outlook—and finds them quietly encouraging.

New Focus on Personal Self

In an article which has a purpose similar to that of Prof. Steiner, the Harvard professor of divinity, Harvey Cox, writes (in *Cross Currents*, Spring, 1977) of the danger to the spirit of Eastern religious philosophy in a merger with conventional Western psychology. Such a blending, he says, "would not cure the soullessness of psychology and it would distort the Oriental teachings into something they are not." He asks:

> Why are we in danger that Western psychology will spoil the meaning Eastern spirituality could have for us unless or until Western psychology undergoes its own reformation first?
>
> The reason is that Western psychology—despite claims to the contrary—still continues to concentrate on the *self*. Its focus remains the ego, the id, the psyche, the secret-me inside—with only peripheral interest directed toward the integral enmeshment of the self in its society, its cosmos, and other immense traceries within which it lives. Psychology has too easily accepted the specialized function assigned it by modern science. It has retreated from cosmology, metaphysics, theology—and the matrix from which it first emerged—and has therefore accepted a reduced and trivialized view of the self. The result is that much of modern psychology, including psychotherapy, has become increasingly mechanical and impersonal. Its effort to understand the psyche without reference to the psyche's relationship to other realms of thought and being has resulted in shallowness and aridity.

Uncertain Revolt

At least some resistance to this trend seems on the way:

> But there is something in every self which balks at this reduced status, a divine spark which senses more ample settings. Psychologists know this too. Consequently, a revolt is underway in psychology—or rather several revolts are going on at the same time. Psychotherapy is now under siege from within

by a whole new set of psychological romantics. The followers of Freud and of various schools of behaviorism find themselves attacked by one or another of the celebrants of madness epitomized by R. D. Laing. But this battle has no winners. While one side eulogizes the benefits of reason and control, the other extols the beauty of insanity; both parties isolate the self from any larger spiritual cosmos. Sane or mad, the soul remains miniaturized. . . .

Meditation Without Ethics

Prof. Cox wonders what may happen as a result of the now almost common practice of "meditation," when undertaken by people whose mental habits have been shaped by such influences. He says:

> Into this troubled situation come the new oriental teachings such as sitting meditation. Not surprisingly, meditation has already been seized upon, both by psychologists and neo-oriental teachers, as yet another device for delving into the bottomless recesses of the self. The Western proclivity for narcissism has been given a new baptism. It has been sanctified not only as a therapeutic but as a sacramental procedure, a means of grace. Self had already been made the ultimate, and now the quest for the true self becomes the path to the Kingdom.

Leads to Misuse

> This congenital narcissism, pervading as it does a culture in which the search for the true self has taken on all the marks of a religious quest, makes it virtually certain that meditation —divorced from an ethical vision—will be grossly understood and misused. Neither in Buddhism nor in Christianity is meditation a method of self-discovery or self-actualization. In the orient it is a step toward escaping illusion and ego, and toward seeing the world of impermanence and suffering for what it is.

Release from illusion, of course, *is* discovery of the true self, but in this discussion Prof. Cox seems wholly concerned with the personal self, which is, indeed, as the Buddhists claim, "an artificial construct." In general, the criticism by this Harvard theologian seems healthy and provocative, showing with great clarity the weakness of any sort of religious or devotional practices which lack philosophy and are also wholly without an impersonal, brotherly motive.

Lindbergh's Philosophy

Reporting on the recently published *Autobiography of Values*

by Charles A. Lindbergh, Robert Kirsch *(Los Angeles Times,* March 9) speaks of the famous flyer as "a strange and moving person," at once practical and mystical, "stoic-seeming yet sensitive," and both "celebrated and reclusive." Throughout its past history, America has been fortunate in many ways, but most of all in the quality of its heroes. The quotations provided by Mr. Kirsch reveal the tone of Lindbergh's autobiographical writing, illustrating the philosophic temper which sustained his life. Lying on the grass in Kenya, he mused:

> "I am form and I am formless, I am life and I am matter, mortal and immortal. I am one and many—myself and humanity in flux. I extend a multiplicity of ways in experience and space. I am myself now, lying on my back in jungle grass, passing through the ether between satellites and stars. . . . After my death, the molecules of my being will return to the earth and the sky. They came from the stars. I am of the stars."

"Immortality of Awareness"

Such themes pervaded Lindbergh's thought during the years of his public activity. There are times, Mr. Kirsch says, when he sounds "like a mystic proclaiming the tideland between the realms of spirit and of man, of the immortality of awareness, of cosmic evolution, of experiences of phantoms and reincarnation in the 22nd hour of his flight to Paris." He thought of himself as belonging to a generation "torn by the impact of new scientific knowledge on old religious dogma," and this spiritual autobiography suggests that he sought and found "a bridge between the two in his ethical and spiritual quest." There is this concluding passage:

> "The growing knowledge of science does not refute man's intuition of the mystical. Whether outwardly or inwardly, whether in space or time, the farther we penetrate into the unknown, the vaster and more marvelous it becomes. Since man's intellect seems bound to man, at least in earthly guise, the search for the form of God begins in the form of man. The form of man is everything. What else is the form of God?"

Impersonality

The mood of these reflections recalls Anne Lindbergh's impressions of her future husband when she first met him in Mexico City (where her father was U.S. Ambassador). She spoke of the challenge of his attitude to "practical, cynical, worldly men," his every action "sincere, spontaneous, direct, full of meaning." He was not any sort of "type"—the newspaper image was a distor-

tion—but a keenly intelligent man who would have excelled in any direction he chose—not just flying solo across the ocean for the first time. Among the qualities she noted were—

> His cool "knowing what he is about" all the time—utter lack of wrecklessness, an amazing, impersonal kind of courage. . . .
>
> Most of the modesty is not modesty—more selfless than that: impersonality. . . .
>
> Tolerant good humor—The way his smile completely changes his face. . . .

In his later years Lindbergh declared that if he had to choose between airplanes and birds, he would choose birds, explaining that he had turned from technological progress to concern for the natural world, hoping to acquire "an awareness of values that confronts us with the need for the means of our salvation."

Depleting Vibration

In the *Path* for June, 1893, Mr. Judge reported a conversation on vibration with H.P.B. He took down what she said in answer to a series of questions, the first of which was concerned with the rate of vibration of the brain molecules. The differences in the rate, she said, are responsible for the differences among all persons. She continued:

> Human beings in general are like so many keys on the piano, each having its own sound, and the combination of which produces other sounds in endless variety. Like inanimate nature they have a keynote from which all the varieties of character and constitution proceed by endless changes.

Vibrations, H.P.B. also said, give "the impulse to every kind of phenomena in the astral plane." With this in mind we turn to a small item of question-and-answer which appeared in the *Seattle Times* of Feb. 5. To the question, "Is it true that a certain kind of rhythm in some rock music can sap a person's strength?" there was the following reply:

> The beat that beats, according to new findings, is a stopped anapest rhythm (short, short, long, pause) which is the exact opposite of the heart and arterial rhythm. Of hundreds of persons tested on an electronic strain gauge, 90 per cent registered an instant loss of two thirds of their normal muscle strength when they heard the beat. The music of the Rolling Stones, the Doors, the Band, Janis Joplin all feature a lot of stopped anapestics.

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